



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 2
290 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, NY 10007-1866

OCT 18 2013

Superintendent
Gateway National Recreation Area
210 New York Avenue
Staten Island, New York 10305

Dear Mr. Superintendent:

In accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act, (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Gateway National Recreation Area (GNRA) - Draft General Management Plan (GMP)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS); CEQ No. 20130230. Transmittal of this letter was delayed by the government shutdown from October 1-16, 2013.

The draft EIS was prepared by the National Park Service. Gateway National Recreation Area covers more than 40 square miles in New York and New Jersey. The park covers 27,025 acres and extends into adjacent waters, including the Atlantic Ocean, Jamaica Bay, Raritan Bay, and Upper and Lower New York Bay. The first GMP for GNRA was finished in 1979. Since then, new park issues and new ideas regarding park management have emerged that are not addressed in the 1979 GMP, warranting the need for a new management plan. Additionally, many of the recommendations made in the 1979 GMP are no longer appropriate due to changing conditions and circumstances in the recreation area.

The draft GMP/EIS proposes three management alternatives. Alternative A is the "no action" alternative; alternatives B and C are action alternatives. Alternative A serves as a baseline for comparing the impacts of implementing the action alternatives. Alternative B is referred to as "Discovery Gateway" and is the NPS preferred alternative. It provides the widest range of activities and most recreation opportunities in dispersed locations throughout the park. Alternative C is referred to as "Experiencing Preserved Places." It provides the most opportunities for independent exploration and "wild" experiences that immerse visitors into natural areas and historic sites and landscapes.

EPA commends the National Park Service for developing a thorough and detailed EIS that addresses management of GNRA by balancing the ecological health of GNRA with improvements to the visitor experience. Key issues such as climate change, sea level rise, water quality enhancements, and sustainability within the park are addressed in detail.

EPA defers to the expertise of the National Park Service in regard to the selection of the preferred alternative. EPA rates the EIS as an "LO - Lack of Objection." Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft EIS for the Gateway National Recreation Area - Draft

General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement. Should you have any questions regarding this letter, or for further assistance with technical assistance in one of EPA's program areas, please feel free to contact Stephanie Lamster at 212-637-3465.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Judy-Ann Mitchell". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Judy-Ann Mitchell, Chief
Sustainability and Multimedia Programs Branch
Clean Air and Sustainability Division